

King County Metro

Americans with Disabilities Act and Universal Access Program Annual Report 2025

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If you need to request this document in alternate formats, please reach out the ADA and Universal Access Program at MeroADA@kingcounty.gov or at 206-477-0321(TTY-711)

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1 Executive Summary

Metro's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Universal Access (UA) Program works across the organization to support divisions in improving accessibility, track overall ADA compliance, and monitoring Metro's first ever ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan.

The ADA and UA Program has developed and implemented new systems to streamline and better track the accessibility needs and experiences of the public, as well as Metro's divisional efforts to deliver accessible transit facilities, programs, and services. These systems include tools to better collect data and measure the many areas of oversight and support the program provides. The ADA and UA team plans to continue building these new systems throughout 2026 and beyond and hopes to gather additional data that demonstrates Metro's ongoing accessibility improvements.

2 Introducing Metro's ADA and UA Program

Metro ADA and UA Program is part of Metro's EEO Office within the General Manager's Office Division. The ADA and UA Program was established in spring 2024 and builds on the foundational work of Metro's long-term ADA Administrator, Dion Graham, before his retirement at the end of 2025.

The program focuses on accessibility and disability equity for Metro riders through compliance, implementation of accessibility projects, policies, initiatives, advocacy, and education. Our team oversees ADA Title II coordination, which focuses on Metro's legal obligations under the ADA to ensure nondiscrimination for riders with disabilities and the accessibility of Metro's transit system, including vehicles, facilities, information, and all services provided to the public.

The ADA and UA Program focuses on Metro's accessibility for the public, where Metro's ADA Title I responsibilities are coordinated separately. Transit Disability Services arranges accommodations and leave for Metro employees, and the EEO Office investigates workplace discrimination complaints to help ensure fair opportunities and treatment of all Metro employees, including those with disabilities.

Metro's ADA and UA program has four primary areas of service:

- **ADA compliance oversight**
 - ADA reasonable modification request tracking and coordination for all fixed-route services and public transit facilities
 - ADA grievance tracking and investigation
 - Appeals for Metro's Access paratransit denials of reasonable modifications requests
 - Communication and engagement with public regarding access barriers
- **ADA, accessibility and, disability equity, training and education**
 - Preparation and distribution of informational and educational resources for Metro Employees

- Customization and development of ADA, disability equity, and universal accessibility training to meet division-specific needs
- Delivery of ADA and UA training across Metro
- **ADA and accessibility technical assistance**
 - Responding to questions and requests from divisions regarding ADA compliance, accessibility improvements, disability equity, and related topics
 - Conducting ADA compliance reviews of transit plans and projects
 - Service as ADA subject matter experts on workgroups, committees, or collaborative efforts
- **ADA Transition Plan implementation and accessibility improvements**
 - Distribution of recommendations from Transition Plan to responsible divisions
 - Supporting divisional action planning
 - Monitor progress and gather data related to ADA compliance
 - Engaging with various community boards and committees
 - Conducting public surveys and outreach to gather feedback on ADA initiatives and their impacts
 - Measurement of Metros' overall progress and resources dedicated to accessibility improvements

3 2025 highlights of the ADA and UA Program and Metro's accessibility improvements:

A. Metro Leadership officially adopts the first-ever ADA Title II Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan

Metro's Deputy General Manager, Ernest Kandelige, finalized and accepted Metro's first ever ADA Title II Transition Plan in March of 2025.

An ADA Transition Plan is required that all state and local government agencies evaluate the accessibility of their public-facing programs and identify improvements needed to provide more accessible services. Metro's transition planning process began with Dion Graham in the Mobility Division in 2022 and took three years to complete under the sponsorship of Mobility Deputy Director Brian Manion.

Metro partnered with Kimley Horne, an ADA compliance evaluation consultant, to review a subset of Metro's public-facing services across Capital, Bus Operations, Mobility, Transit Facilities, and the General Managers Office. The resulting plan identified more than 200 findings and recommendations to improve ADA compliance and accessibility, providing a roadmap for better serving riders with disabilities and the public.

B. Transition Plan implementation officially kicked off in three divisions

The ADA and UA program has compiled and organized all 202 findings and recommendations from the Transition Plan and divided them into Divisional Action Plans to help divisions understand their

roles in improving ADA compliance and accessibility, prioritize and plan specific action items, and track their progress.

The Divisional Action Plans provide an opportunity for divisions to reflect on work that they have already completed to improve accessibility, as well as identify additional projects and ideas not included in the Transition Plan that will contribute to improving accessibility of Metro's services.

Three divisions launched their Divisional Action Plans with the ADA and UA team in 2025:

- a. General Manager's Office
- b. Bus Operations
- c. Transit Facilities

These divisions have reviewed and updated all existing Transition Plan recommendations and have begun prioritizing and planning accessibility improvement projects. The ADA and UA program will continue working closely with divisions to monitor progress and provide technical assistance and partnership throughout implementation. Progress will be tracked at both the divisional level and collectively to measure Metro's overall improvements and impacts. The ADA and UA Program developed a [standard operating procedure](#) that includes information about the systems to track individual projects, data gathering, and the frameworks for which our program encourages Metro to work within to exceed compliance and strive for inclusive, intersectional, and universally accessible outcomes.

C. Metro completed web accessibility evaluation

In April 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice issued a new rule requiring all state and local governments to comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 standards by April 2027.

In partnership with the various information and communications teams across Metro, the ADA and UA team compiled over 150 web-based assets, including webpages, web applications, web-based forms, and related resources.

In March 2025, Metro contracted with a web accessibility expert Direct Access to conduct a prioritized accessibility evaluation. The evaluation provided Metro's Web Team with recommendations to remediate accessibility barriers across Metro's web services.

Metro's Web Team began remediation work in October 2025 and has made significant progress toward meeting WCAG 2.1 full compliance. The team is also striving to exceed the minimum standard by aligning with WCAG 2.2, further improving the accessibility of Metro's website.

Metro's ADA and UA Program has been a leader within King County and among regional transit agencies in this work and provided technical assistance to several other departments as they scope their own web accessibility compliance efforts.

D. ADA and Universal Access team implemented better tracking systems to measure program reach across Metro divisions riders

a. New case management system launched

The ADA and UA team adopted a new case management system through the Origami platform to process and track ADA grievances and reasonable modifications requests. This system helps the team remain compliant within required timelines for processing grievances and reasonable modifications requests while providing more accurate data on trends related to formal grievances or rider requests. The insights can help inform adjustments and projects that improve accessibility across Metro's system.

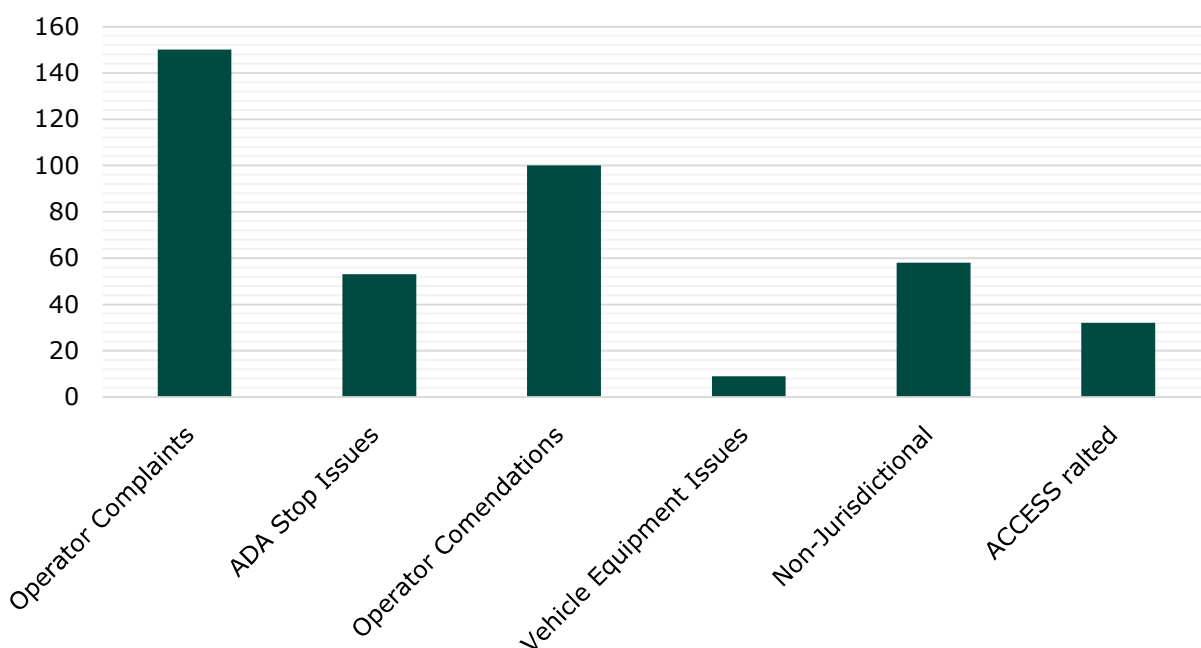
b. New triage process and tracking protocol for public input

The ADA and UA program developed a system to triage the daily emails routed to the MetroADA@kingcounty.gov inbox through the Customer Information Office (CIO) regarding ADA- and disability- related complaints and rider experiences using Metro's transit system.

Although only a portion of these communications are processed as formal ADA grievances and entered into the Origami case management system, categorizing all communications enables the ADA and UA team to identify trends across a broader range of riders and their experiences.

Since implementing the new triage system in May 2025, the ADA and UA Program reviewed and categorized 402 communications from or on behalf of riders with disabilities, including: 150 operator complaints, 53 stop issues, 100 operator commendations, 9 vehicle equipment issues, 58 non-jurisdictional communications, and 32 Access paratransit-related communications.

ADA Customer Complaint Triage Count May-Dec 2025



c. New technical assistance request and tracking system

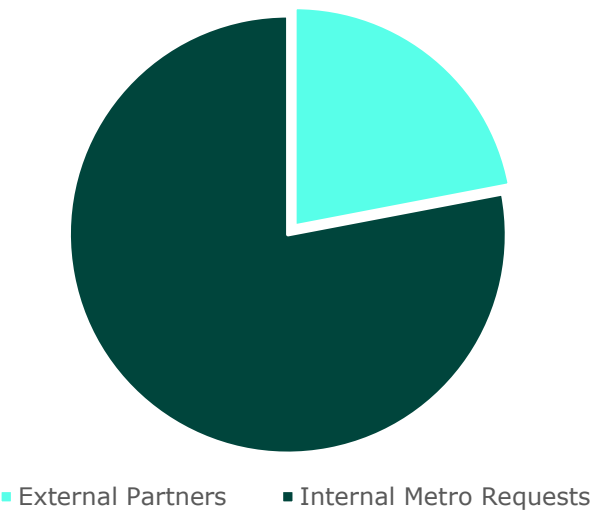
The ADA and UA Program receives questions related to ADA regulations, guidance, evaluations, training, and collaborative projects. The team developed a form and tracking system using a work management platform to better understand the volume and breadth of requests from across the Metro divisions and sections, as well as other King County departments and regional transit partners.

The team tracked and responded to 70 requests throughout 2025. Of those requests, 79% came from Metro divisions, while 21% from external partners, including other King County departments and regional transit partners.

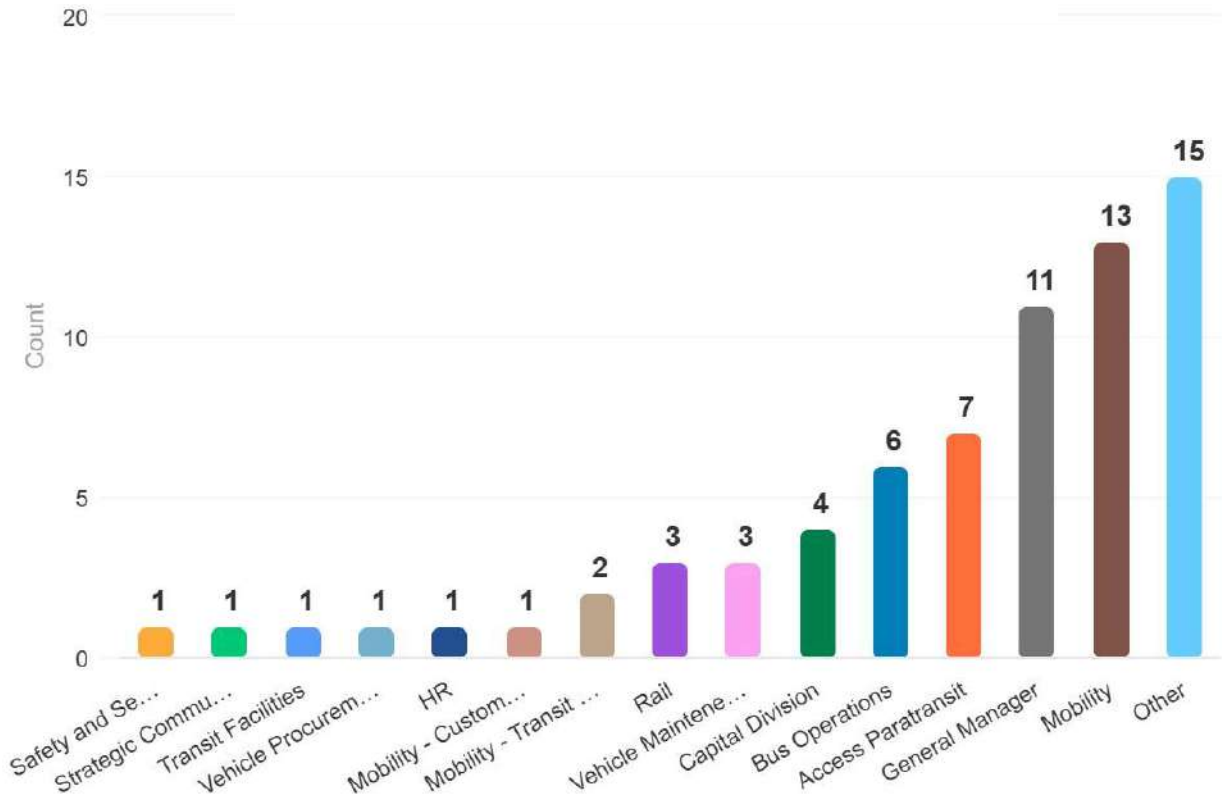
Examples of technical assistance provided by the ADA and UA team include collaboration Metro's all-door boarding. The new all-door boarding and Tap to Pay system created an opportunity to educate the public about the importance of using rear doors whenever possible if they do not have a disability or accessibility need. This helps riders who use mobility devices, require the bus lift, or have other accessibility needs board more efficiently through the front door while preserving access to priority seating.

The ADA and UA team also responded to inquiries from three different King County departments regarding Metro's progress on our WCAG evaluation remediation. Metro shared information about the scope of its web accessibility evaluation, which other departments can use as a model, as well as findings that can help guide remediation of their own web-based assets.

Internal Vs. External Request



Technical assistance requests by division or work group

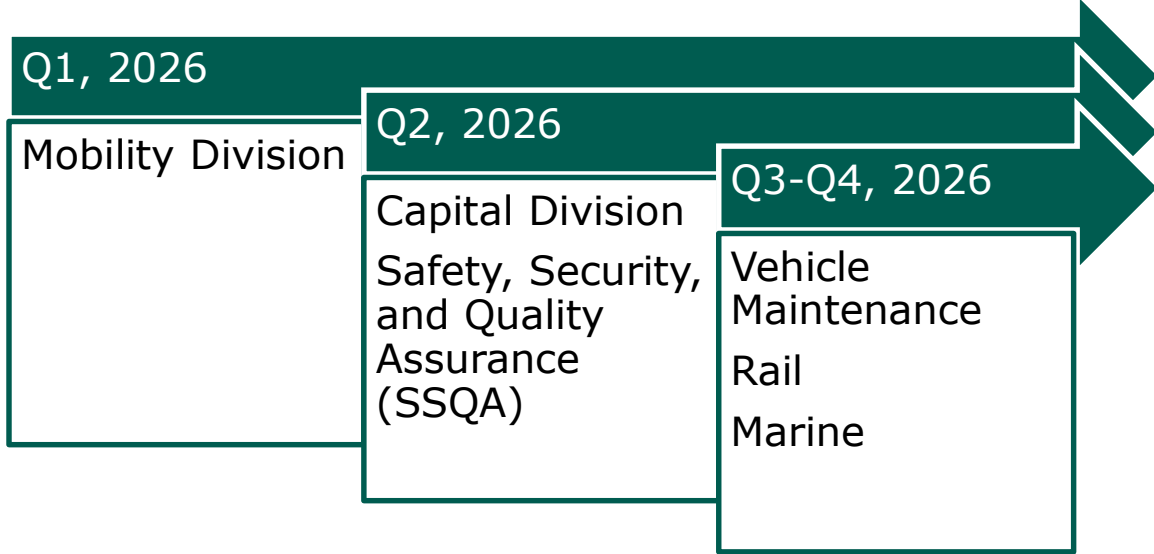


d. Regular ADA connections at bus bases

Starting summer of 2025, the ADA and UA team began rotating among Metro’s bus bases to better understand training needs, answer questions about ADA requirements, accessibility, and disability etiquette, and learn more about the challenges operators face in the field. Throughout the year, the team spent approximately 50 hours at bus bases and recorded approximately 95 engagements with operators, supervisors, and base chiefs, gathering feedback while providing consultation and education on ADA services and accessibility in daily operations.

4 Work planned for 2026

Metro will continue launching Divisional Action Plans for the remaining divisions to support planning and prioritization of ADA and accessibility improvements.



a. Continued evaluation, implementation, and tracking

As planning and implementation of Transition Plan projects continue, divisions will identify additional opportunities to improve accessibility in their Divisional Action Plans. These additions will not only create new opportunities to address access accessibility barriers for the public but will also provide more data on the progress Metro is making toward delivering a fully accessible transit system for King County.

b. Expanded ADA resources and training available to all Metro employees

Training was the number one theme identified in the Transition Plan findings and recommendations. The ADA and UA Program is compiling resources on the ADA, disability equity, universal access, and universal design that will be available to all Metro employees at no cost. These resources will help employees learn new ways to incorporate accessibility into their work.

The ADA and UA Program is also developing new strategies and systems to provide in-house ADA training and training support for divisions, creating a more intentional and comprehensive department-wide program focused on accessibility in public transit.

c. WCAG remediation for publicly available documents

The ADA and UA team is cataloging all documents available to the public through Metro's websites and developing a plan to contract for remediation work to meet the new WCAG 2.1 and 2.2 accessibility standards extended to April, 2027. In addition to remediating existing content, the team will continue providing education, resources, and tools to communications and public engagement teams to help them create more accessible public documents going forward.

d. Increase collaboration with regional transit partners

The ADA and UA program has partnered with Sound Transit, Pierce Transit, Community Transit, and Washington State Ferries to establish the Regional Transit Accessibility Network (RTAN), an accessibility-focused transit collaboration. Metro's participation in RTAN is creating opportunities to collaborate with regional transit agency peers to develop more consistent policies, guidelines, and resources that improve accessibility and

create a more seamless transit experience for riders traveling across jurisdictions. Examples of Metro's ADA and UA program collaborations with RTAN partners include:

- Shared guidelines on other powered mobility devices (OPMDs) in transit vehicles
- Services for people with hidden or non-apparent disabilities
- WCAG and accessible communications
- Accessible wayfinding

e. Continued engagement with disability community

The ADA and UA program will continue to engage with existing disability community partners while seeking opportunities to bring new voices into planning for accessibility improvements and better understand their impacts on riders.

Guided by the principle of "Nothing about us without us," planned engagement activities include:

- Continued, monthly, engagement with the King County Disability Consortium
- Quarterly updates to the Metro Transit Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Continued Engagement with Access Paratransit Advisory Committee (APAC)
- New accessibility data gathering through ridership surveys
- A biannual newsletter highlighting a specific accessibility improvement for the public

5 Closing

The ADA and UA Program continues to refine our processes and seeks ways to eliminate access barriers with creative solutions in partnership with Metro's various service experts. Improving our overall accessibility contributes to Metro's Long Game to continue to demonstrate the value of public transit to grow capacity and resources, which will result in more service and measurable outcomes. We will continue to expand the ways we serve our Metro divisions' specific needs while always centering on the disability experience and voice of the community. By putting a greater emphasis on data gathering within our four main services we will develop better metrics to guide Metro in future decisions regarding resources and priorities which we can be linked to the real impacts and benefits this work has on our ridership with and without disabilities.

Contact information and related links:

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<https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/metro/about/policies/ace/ada>

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Technical assistance request form:

If you have a question about ADA, accessibility solution or require an accessibility subject matter expert on your project, please reach out the ADA and Universal Access Program by filling out a technical assistance request form here: <https://wkf.ms/42gN2EE>



Technical Assistance Requests Form



Accessibility, **C**ivil Rights, and **E**qual Employment Opportunity

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